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Creators	Barbieri, Donatella

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Proposing an interdisciplinary, movement-based approach to teaching and learning as applied to design for performance related areas

Donatella Barbieri

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Introduction

This paper investigates the potential of teaching and learning across disciplines, within an intensive workshop environment, and in particular it focuses on the relevance of movement and embodiment in the development of renewed creative practice.

The search for creative approaches that engage the body as the primary source in the creative process, finds potential answers in the ideas explored by physical theatre teacher Jacques Lecoq in his internationally influential school in Paris. Here, ideas of the universality of the language of the body in movement are applied to the development of physical performance, re-defining, over the past fifty years, the theatrical space with dynamic, renewed physical form.

Originally an athlete, Jacques Lecoq's teaching challenged Cartesian notions of mind-body dualism by stating, as a central precept of his teaching that 'the body knows things we don't yet know'. Thus, if the repositioning of the knowing, moving, communicative body in physical theatre can be so effective, is there potential for the body, as a universal resource, to find creative and pedagogical applications to other fields beyond the rehearsal room?

More specifically, with reference to my teaching and practice as a costume designer, if the creative centre of performance is sited within the physical moving presence of the performer as a dynamic sculptural and expressive form in the theatre space, how can this be integrated in the creative process and in the way we teach design for performance?

To explore these questions I will revisit the structure and the outcomes of two cross disciplinary workshops which I attended, both run by Complicite, before going on to discuss in greater depth the Moving/Drawing workshop, which I organised at London College of Fashion, drawing on ideas from both workshops.

My introduction to a practical way of working which offered a spatial exploration of the body through both movement and sculptural body-centred plastic construction, was the LEM, the Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement, (Laboratory for the Study of Movement) held over two weeks, in London in September 2005.

The week-long Photography, Image and the Body workshop, held in the Soho Laundry rehearsal space in July 2006, explored the potential for symbiosis between photography and movement, while in three intensive days the Moving/Drawing workshop, March 2007, investigated the possibilities of expanding confidence in drawing the figure through movement and through a growing awareness of the expressive presence of our own bodies.

In order to assess the impact of the work of these workshops, I will review the evidence available, including my own notes, looking at the outcomes of the workshops through photographs and drawings from the participants, interviews with participants wherever possible, reviewing videos and photographs, and include interviews with the workshop leaders. I will aim to draw conclusions that have informed shifts in my perception of my creative process and therefore how I teach.

The LEM, Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement, (Laboratory for the Study of Movement)

The form and function of movement in space and the centrality of the body to performance are the fundamental principles on which École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq is based. The LEM, a separate study area within the school, evolved from experimental teaching sessions held with architecture students at The École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.

Since Jacques' death in 1999, his daughter Pascale has led the laboratory with architect Krikor Belekien, who in 1977 developed with Jacques Lecoq the LEM workshop approach. Together, they ran the intensive two week laboratory in London in September 2005, which was produced by Natasha Freedman Complicite Education Director and held in the White Performance Space, at Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design.

The twenty five participants included actors, directors, writers, artists, costume and set designers and film-makers. The space used by the laboratory consisted of the large white-walled, empty performance space adjacent to a workshop, which was equipped with several benches. Participants to the laboratory moved between the performance floor and the benches in the interplay of physical movement and the three-dimensional exploration inherent to the LEM. Most of the movement work was led by Pascale, while Krikor led the visual development work.

The work started in most of the exercises and projects with physical movement which engaged the body with a particular spatial focus, from an initial exploration of the dynamism of lines and planes in relation to the body, to, later, the exploration of the expression of human emotions and passions and their relationship to the physical space of the body. This, in turn, led to addressing the physical articulation of character and narrative in the final part of the workshop. Each stage of the physical, on-the-floor work, was matched by a particular visual, three-dimensional task or exercise.

Sarah Ainslie's photographs of physical work with planes and lines capture the way the body was perceived as a space in the LEM exercises.

Thus discoveries through the physical work of the body, were then translated by creative visual work, working with colour, building structures, masks, objects, and always in relation to the body, the space and movement.



Image 1



Image 2

Images 1 and 2:
Sarah Ainslie's photographs of physical work with planes and lines capture the way the body was perceived as a space in the LEM exercises.



Image 3

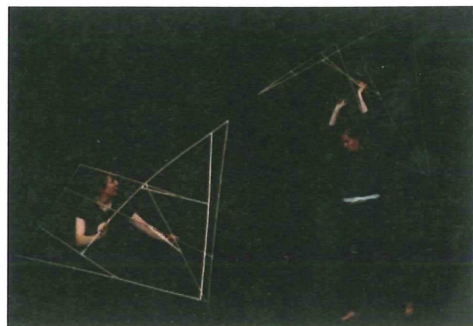


Image 4

These constructions were then animated by the participants through improvised expressive movement.

Kathryn Hunter's extended body, image 3, which she created in response to a scene in *Don Quixote*, and the dynamic structures in image four, demonstrate the integration of movement and form. Both moments were photographed by Sarah Ainslie.

Participant Sue Goodman, choreographer, speaks of the creative journey undertaken in the laboratory as '...a process which made us understand that there is no safe formula and that openness to the moment, in its very vulnerability, is what is required and is the only way to be truly inventive'.

Images 3 and 4: Kathryn Hunter's extended body, image 3, which she created in response to a scene in *Don Quixote*, and the dynamic structures in image 4, demonstrate the integration of movement and form. Both moments were photographed by Sarah Ainslie.

The 'neutral mask' exercised ways of existing in the moment. The physical mask work was designed to establish the principle that 'gesture precedes thought' (Murray 2003: 76). One of the mask workshops involved the mask waking, standing up and moving as if seeing the world for the first time.

An essential dimension of the process was the idea of 'play' while responding to the exercises or the project briefs. Play was through manipulation of materials, ideas, using space and movement, in a process that invited openness, curiosity, intuition and learning by doing, undoing and re-doing, where participants were encouraged 'to forget what you know, play with what you instinctively feel, use your intuition' by workshop leader Krikor Belekien.

Complicite artistic director Simon McBurney, who trained with Lecoq, recognises the LEM's influence on his work at a fundamental level: 'quite simply it is about the imagination. And how you articulate it', he writes in his letter of invitation to LEM participants, 'It revealed to me how I could formalise ideas that seemed would always remain ideas and be destined to "never take shape"'.

As a performer, director and film-maker, Simon McBurney is suggesting that the processes offered by the LEM – he attended the year-long course in Paris – had an impact on the way he worked creatively, on how he uses his mind. Much of the work produced in the LEM workshop was three-dimensional, taking form through connecting with an instinctive, moving, playing self, and this created a shift in his way of thinking through problems.

Natasha Freedman, who was instrumental in bringing the LEM to London, identifies the connection between the LEM and Complicite's creative process as it develops new productions.

'The rigorous workshop structure of the LEM offers a very practical process through which to explore one's own instinctive imagination and playfulness, and seems to have a profound impact on participants.... LEM is fundamentally a cross-disciplinary process the whole idea of cross-disciplinary experimentation is central to Complicite's work. For example, for our current production, which is about mathematics, we have been working with mathematicians, tabla players, Bharatanatyam dancers, actors and designers, exploring ideas. One aspect of our education work is as much about developing our own ideas as it is extending the ideas to others, so I tend to be very involved in pulling together people from different disciplines for research and development workshops at the early stages of the devising process.'



Image 6

The Photography, Image and the Body

The Photography, Image and the Body workshop proposed a way of seeing that, through its interplay with movement, effectively engaged the whole body in the process of seeing.

The participants to the Photography, Image and the Body workshop captured the moving body in group work, these exercises later fed into the Moving/Drawing workshop. Photographs by the author.

Produced by Natasha Freedman from Complicite, run by Lecoq, the Feldenkrais-trained performer, director and teacher Lilo Baur and photographer Sarah Ainslie, this was a week long workshop which took place in the Soho Laundry studio space in July 2006. The LEM was integral to the development of the ideas for the workshop as Natasha points out.

Images 5 and 6: The participants to the Photography, Image and the Body workshop captured the moving body in group work, these exercises later fed into the Moving/Drawing workshop.



Image 5

'Certainly ideas from the LEM and Lecoq fed into the workshop but I was also interested in experimenting with ideas such as how the subject observes the photographer and how important the physical presence of the photographer is in the two-way act of looking, and also turning photography into a physical activity, not coming from a visual art perspective but from a dynamic, spatially aware perspective, applying to the work with the camera the idea of tensions and dynamics which we explore in LEM.'

The workshop focused on the body in movement and the notion of capturing it through the camera lens while also exploring the expressive potential of the body in movement. The eighteen participants included actors, designers, a sculptor/puppeteer, film editors and photographers. The structure included time for movement and photography as well as reflection and review of prints, which gradually, day by day, took over the white walls of the rehearsal room. The space was a large rehearsal room, normally used by the theatre company Shared Experience, with a wooden floor and a large skylight above giving access to ample natural light, and as such it encompassed both the needs of the photographer and the physical performer.

Lilo Baur's work as a performer has included extensive participation in Complicite productions, she now directs her own work and is invited to lead workshops and seminars on physical theatre internationally.

Though some of the physical exercises were similar to the LEM, such as work with plane, lines and the use of the neutral mask, Lilo clearly sited the idea of 'play' with the work of the body in movement. Games, from name games to rhythm and sound, or even games such as movement based playground classics such as 'grandmother's footsteps', were part of warm-ups integrated in the physical creative work. This, as well as creating openness and camaraderie between the participants, placed the sense of play, the ability to 'create something out of nothing' at the centre of the process. In the openness of the atmosphere created, participants were just as much at ease with taking pictures as with being photographed.

'Working with the body meant that we looked in a different way – using our whole bodies'. In this way, Sarah Ainslie indicates potentially a real shift in the understanding of what looking is. This idea was reinforced at various points, as the participants were involved in exercises that required them to wear a blindfold. For example, they searched in pairs through touch alone for an object on the floor, while holding hands. Other blind physical work included creating poses with fellow participants' bodies, by moving them into positions, and sculpting body figures out of clay, all whilst blindfolded, or running with your eyes closed towards a standing Lilo and trying to get as near as possible without opening your eyes. The use of the blindfold was designed to extend physical awareness whilst also sharpening the perception of the subjectivity of seeing.

Sarah Ainslie, who has run several photography workshops, including one with partially sighted people, is clear on the creative potential and the learning opportunities offered by the workshop:

'I have never done a workshop that crossed into a different art form. As a photographer you are often in your own head, it's you and your camera. Involving the body in movement, one's own body in movement meant that the participants freed up enormously and that the work developed really quickly. I do believe that what you see and how you see is very important... In the end the workshop exceeded my expectations. I knew that working physically with photography was going to be really interesting but ultimately the development and the quality of the work and of the experience was even better than I had expected'.

She concludes, expanding on the value of the experience:

'Some of the work we do in workshops such as this one will translate into our own way of being and helps us find a renewed way of looking at the world. The workshop proposed a way to look at the world differently'.

For Sarah Ainslie, as for Simon McBurney, the application of the learning goes beyond the physical awareness and the quality of the photographs, and it has an effect on our way of seeing.

As well as 'looking' in a different way, the focused observation of movement and the heightened physical awareness, promoted a way of working that proposed a more fluid relationship between subject and photographer, while also offering practical processes to photographer aimed at enabling them, in Natasha Freedman's words, 'to direct their subject more precisely'.

The shared language of the body bridges the gap between the two discreet disciplines of photography and movement, both in terms of sharing a broad philosophical aim, (a renewed way of looking at the world) and in the specificity of particular learning outcomes (to enable the photographer to direct their subject).

'Some of the work we do in workshops such as this one will translate into our own way of being and helps us find a renewed way of looking at the world. The workshop proposed a way to look at the world differently'.

Moving/Drawing workshop

The symbiosis between the corporeal and plastic exploration embodied by the LEM and the interdisciplinary approach to learning in the Photography, Image and the Body workshop presented scope for challenging established teaching practices in the creative processes related to the design for performance subject area.

As a participant in both workshops, and as a designer and a teacher, I remain convinced that the integration of innovative ideas from experimental professional workshops such as these into teaching practice is not only critical for the development of related subject areas, but significantly enriching for both participating students and workshop leaders.

Drawing the body can be a problematic area of teaching in the complex and multi-layered subject area of design for performance. In my experience, students' own relationship to figurative drawing can be complex and sometimes troubled, as the drawing itself is not the end product of their practice but an essential part of the process. Drawing the body is an integral part of the work of the designer for performance, both in terms of the creative process and as a way of beginning to capture the design concept. This is particularly relevant to the costumed body, where the delivery of costume drawings is often a contractual obligation for costume designers. Equally, I believe, the visual dialogue with a 'moving', expressive figure, through storyboards or in sketch work, is an essential tool in constructing conceptual and spatial dynamism of the world of the performance as created through costume.



Image 7:
'Bathers: Pool', by Charlotte Hodes, 92 x 126cm,
digitally manipulated drawing, inkjet and collage
onto paper, 2006

Consequently, to return to my initial question, if the creative centre of performance is sited within the physical moving presence of the performer, as a dynamic sculptural and expressive form in the theatre space, how can this be integrated in the creative process and in the way we teach design for performance?

The idea of the Moving/Drawing workshop emerged from the sense that both movement and drawing are at the root of the creation of performance and that both activities can be problematic for students. Movement, in particular the movement of one's own body, can be an anathema to students who perceive their work as an activity that they largely experience and practice in their heads and with their hands.

Lilo Baur's ability to create an environment of mutual trust between the participants and an ease with one's own movement in the Photography, Image and the Body workshop, led me to ask if she would be interested in working with non-acting students. Her positive response was qualified by her knowledge of the steep learning curve that takes place in bodies that are unaccustomed to see themselves as a source of creativity; in fact, she finds working with non-actors stimulating and she has worked with a range of different groups, including leading a physical theatre workshop for business people. Similarly to her teacher Jacques Lecoq, her initial background is in sports. She now occasionally teaches at her old school, Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq.

As well as working towards a physical, intuitive openness through games involving movement, rhythm, voice and touch, Lilo enabled the participants to prepare the body for ease of movement through stretch work and warm ups aimed at protecting the body, whilst applying influences from Yoga, Feldenkrais and Chi-Kong movement practices.

I became convinced that the resulting learning environment, with participants challenged to explore their physical creativity, would be the appropriate context where the complex relationship between drawing, movement and the body could be questioned.

Fine artist and Senior Research Fellow in Drawing at London College of Fashion Charlotte Hodes, who has practiced and taught drawing for over twenty years, has also been interested in challenging established teaching practices in the drawing of the body. Her work is widely exhibited, including recently a solo exhibition at the Wallace Collection. In her work, figures inhabit and move within their own autonomous space:

'My subject is the female figure as a motif juxtaposed with alternative historical representations enveloped by pattern, drapery, contemporary motifs'

The drawing materials she employs range from orthodox methods such as pencil or ink to the use of the scalpel knife, or of the computer and digital photography, as she constructs intricate and layered images.

A shared dissatisfaction with the virtually universal acceptance of the easel as the key in the teaching of life drawing, a desire to experiment with renewed ways to develop drawings and the creative potential of students' engagement with movement provided the common ground necessary for an interdisciplinary dialogue to be instigated between Charlotte, Lilo and myself.

The successful application for the Making a Difference 2006/7 award, which I submitted to the Creative Learning in Practice Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Clip Cetl), ensured that the dialogue could materialise into concrete ideas.

The Moving/Drawing workshop took place, in March 2007, at Lime Grove, a London College of Fashion site, in a large, light space, with a wooden floor and tall windows, fitted with blinds. For the three days of the workshop all furniture had been removed from the room, leaving maximum space for movement.

Students from all of the University of the Arts London design for performance related courses were given the opportunity to take part. The twenty spaces available were filled with self-selecting students from London College of Fashion, Wimbledon School of Art and Central Saint Martin's, and they ranged from one BA level right through to one PhD student.

Information about the workshop was communicated to the students via the relevant teaching staff and course directors.

Prior to the workshop the participating students were informed that they should wear comfortable clothes, similar to what they would wear to the gym, that much of the time would be spent bare-footed, and that movement was central to the way drawing was going to happen. The use of simultaneous videoing and projection as an integral part of the workshop was also made obvious, reinforcing through the presence of the eye of the camera, the sense that participants were going to be both the subject and the object in

Lilo describes this process of discovery, of challenge to one's own comfort zone as 'the necessary physical experience of loss of balance that enables one to discover new ways of working'.

the drawing process.

The existence of the camera throughout the three days of the workshop had been proposed as a way to capture and replay movement work. Early on in the process the presence of the live-feed projections became a kind of background, a strangely angled mirror, resulting in the students adjusting easily to its presence.

Later the slowed down projections of the students' own movement work became a part of the drawing process, one of the elements they could focus on against the live, moving or still bodies. From its single view point the camera was focused on the group, not on the individual, which added to its disinhibiting effect as the students saw themselves very much as acting as part of a group, a drawing group in the process of capturing a moving group and vice-versa.

The 'team spirit' within the group was installed clearly by Lilo from the first warm-up at the very beginning of the workshop,

right through to the final exercise. On the first day the participants learned each other's names through two games, one using rhythm, standing in a circle and the other playing 'catch'. By the end of the three day workshop the students, in small groups, were a short story, which they staged in frozen moments to the rest of the group and which they also drew in storyboards.

The sense of working together in a safe environment facilitated the openness required to make personal discoveries through taking risks in a way that individual students had not experienced before. Lilo describes this process of discovery, of challenge to one's own comfort zone as 'the necessary physical experience of loss of balance that enables one to discover new ways of working'.

Establishing a new way of working and a space in which students could take risks was equally important in Charlotte's approach to drawing. Following a planning meeting between Charlotte, Lilo and myself in January, Charlotte was clear on her learning objectives and on a way of working with drawing in the context of the workshop:

'It was important to work quickly with the drawing and on the floor, not on easels or donkeys. It was crucial that the students became unselfconscious as quickly as possible, to think not about 'making a picture' but of drawing as a process. I wanted them not to work in sketchbooks (which might contain a history of their previous drawings) but on loose paper, with lots of paper of different shapes and sizes to represent the spatial dimension of our work and their specific, individual needs, to have materials available to them, and possible choices about what they used.'

Thanks to the CLIP CETL award we were able to provide most of the material for the workshop, so that we could attempt to establish in a practical way, the sense of a renewed approach to drawing as well as an invitation to challenge one's own drawing practice. The shared floor, simultaneously a drawing and a moving space, became representative of the symbiotic relationship between movement and drawing.

The premise of the workshop was to understand the body through movement and the succession of exercises progressively explored this.

Physical warm-ups and games

Warm-up floor work and stretches were tailored to prepare the body for the physical work and to focus the mind. Beyond her Lecoq training, Lilo made reference to Yoga, Feldenkrais and Chi-Kong movement practices to introduce the idea of the body as tool and a resource that can be managed to prevent injury and that may be mended when injury occurs. These practices, which are fundamental for physical performers, can be empowering as they engender self-knowledge and a more holistic understanding of how the body works. For example work with pressure points and with the spine revealed to the students hidden strength and challenges within their bodies. In one specific exercise one participant held the weight of another's head in their hands as they walked, demonstrating to both the physical weight carried by the spine as the 'supported' body felt incredibly light and tall.

The warm-up also included games, either sitting in a circle or taking over the whole space, and involved movement, sound, rhythm, words, singing or objects to pass, hide, catch or find. A memorable game in groups of four involved passing laughter through the eyes from one participant to another, from a twinkle in the eye, backwards and forwards across the line of seated participants, until it became a falling-off-the-chair roar. Games took place at the beginning of the day or after a lunch break, and they were often a playful introduction to a 'serious' physical exercise. The day ended with an energetic but orderly 'jumping in rhythm' game. The games did not lead directly into drawing but set up a working environment that, although deeply serious and hard working throughout the three days, was nurturing through its inherent sense of fun whilst also aiming to create a trusting and positive group dynamic.

Drawing warm-ups and physical work.

Games often fed into physical exercises, which would then become drawing exercises. On the first day, for instance, when many of the students had just met, the participants in pairs, with eyes shut and holding hands, would guide one another trying to find an object on the floor. Having established 'touch' through the holding of hands as a part of the work, the participants were then asked to arrange the bodies of a fellow participant in an expressive pose and then physically copy that position, whilst keeping their eyes shut throughout. In the drawing exercises that followed students drew their own posed companions, in quick drawings. These acted as a warm up for the drawing of the body, establishing the sense of working from a felt understanding of the pose created.



Image 8

Participants were encouraged by Charlotte Hodes to layer their images as a way to explore movement on paper.

Other drawing warm-up exercises included drawing the movement of the body while it unravelled itself from a sitting position, twisting, turning, standing and stretching as tall as it could go. As in several of the movement exercises the whole group executed the physical work together before being divided into two halves, with each half able to draw the other half having understood the movement from having executed it. Unable to capture the body itself, given the complexity of the continuous movement, participants found other ways to express the energy of the movement and its dynamic direction through their work.

Julia Reindell's pastel drawings, images 9 and 10, of unravelling movement suggest the presence of the body through its trajectory.

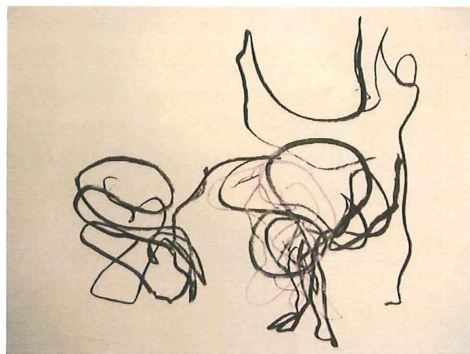


Image 9



Image 10

Bodies in relation to the space

Large foamboard sheets provided planes through which specific physical dynamics could be experienced and amplified by the moving bodies while being captured by the viewing 'bodies'. By holding the foamboard at right angles against the body while moving in the space, the participants could project outwards specific exaggerated poses. The foamboard planes were held up at shoulder level, at chest level, hip level and knee level.

Positioning their body in response to the large sheets held in their hands, the participants acquired specific qualities as they changed in between the different levels, becoming the embodiment of very powerful or extremely dignified characters as they walked with their heads and bodies tilted upwards whilst holding the foamboard under their chins, which forced their chests outwards, whereas they became old, tired and down trodden as they bent their spines so as to hold the card at knee level.

In the drawings emerging from this exercise, the flat planes of the card added a spatial dimension, which could be related to the bodies as they moved through the space of the page.

In Isobel Dunhill's drawing, image 11, movement is created by the contrast between foreground and background figures, echoed by the positioning of the boards, while in Claire Strickland's drawing, image 12, movement exists through the repeated, minimalist and expressive figures crossing the space.

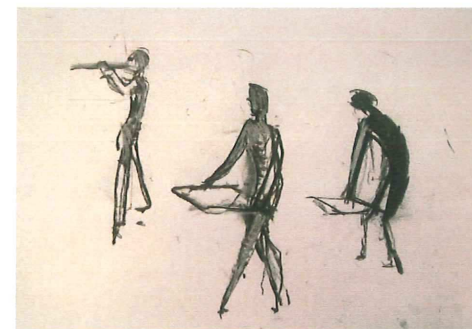


Image 12

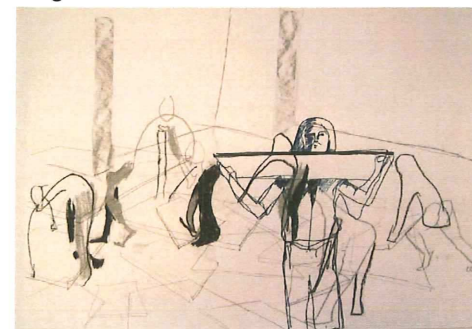


Image 11

Image 8: Participants were encouraged by Charlotte Hodes to layer their images as a way to explore movement on paper. Image 8, drawing by Zoe Payne.

Images 9 and 10: Julia Reindell's pastel drawings, images 9 and 10, of unravelling movement suggest the presence of the body through its trajectory.

Images 11 and 12: In Isobel Dunhill's drawing, image 11, movement is created by the contrast between foreground and background figures, echoed by the positioning of the boards, while in Claire Strickland's drawing, image 12, movement exists through the repeated, minimalist and expressive figures crossing the space.

Line, Circle, body and tension

Armed with metre long bamboo canes, the students made a circle in which the bodies were interspaced by the bamboo canes, which were tensioned between the index fingers of the participants, thus enlarging the circle right to the edge of the room. In a long continuous, silent exercise, the circle contracted, tangled up, with bodies still connected, and its shape became like a continuous ball of knotted threads, made of arms and bamboo sticks, moving, pushing and pulling in different directions. Eventually, once prompted, it returned, slowly and carefully, to its original shape. The challenge was not to drop any of the sticks whilst getting into the most tangled position possible and eventually to be able to find one's own way back to one's initial position.

The drawing process was so useful that Charlotte proposed to draw this work both live, in two groups, but also as a slowed down projection against static tensioned bodies, so that the participants could explore ways to represent the body in movement in opposition to the still body.

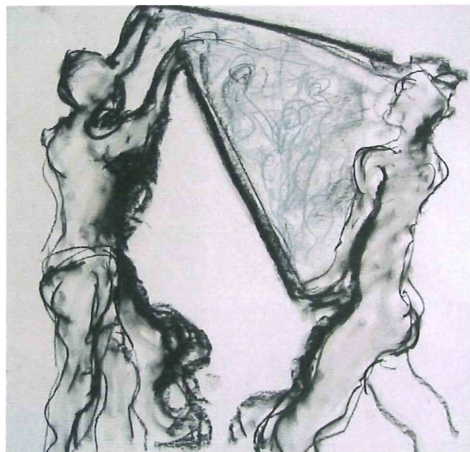


Image 13



Images 13 and 14:
Both Dan Liu's (image 13) and Hannah Gravestock's (image 14) drawings convey the movement and tension of the bodies connected by the bamboo sticks.

Bodies in relation to one another

Two participants were asked to walk diagonally from the farthest two corners of the room to two chairs waiting in the middle of the room. They then stood in front of their chair for a moment, then sat down simultaneously, then turned towards one another and looked ahead, then stood up and walked away. 'Something happens every time, and we, as an audience, construct a meaning out of what we see', Lilo would note as the viewing group was moved or amused by how the different pairs reacted to one another. 'The meaning happens in the space between the bodies not just within each body' Charlotte would point out to the drawing participants. The paper shape chosen by many of the students for their drawing in this exercise was a long strip, reflecting the narrative potential of the drawing work and introducing the idea of storyboard.

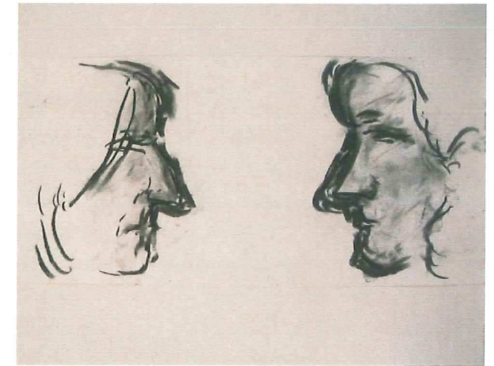


Image 16

Images 15 and 16:
In Bethan Hopkins' drawing (image 15) the movement is expressed through subtly drawing attention to the changing space in between the figures in the different moments, while in Dan Liu's (image 16) close-up the space between the figures expands or contracts, drawing attention to the narrative potential between the figures.

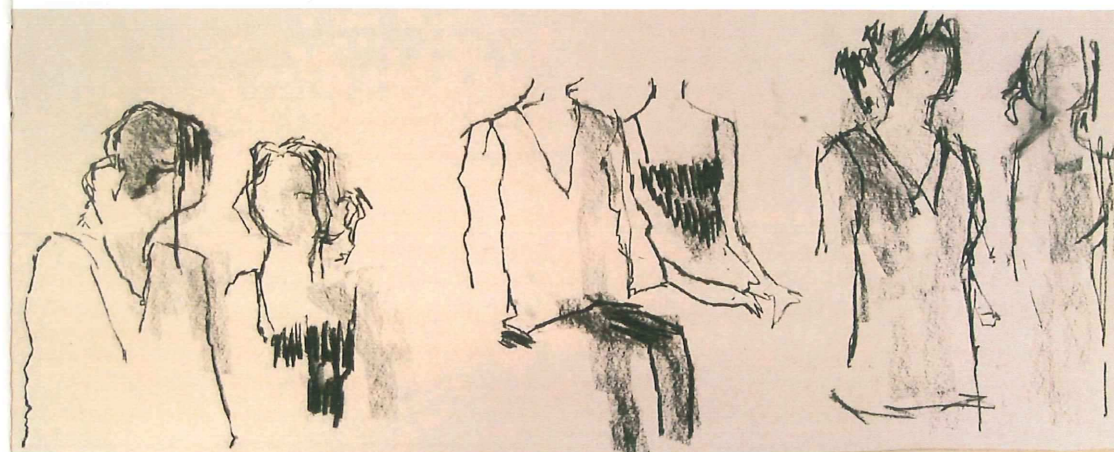


Image 15

'Everything moves'

With the group sat in a circle, using samples of the actual material, Lilo demonstrated how cling film, sticky tape, sponge and cotton wool move, and how each different material's movement suggested its own quality and had its own weight, rhythm and speed. Then clusters of participants, all looking ahead, were asked to move forward in the space by overtaking one another while only moving as a specified material, such as cotton wool, sponge, cling film, metal or champagne bubbles.

This was noted by more than one student in their feedback as one of the most useful exercises as the students began to associate physical materials, character and movement.

Storyboards

Having explored creative possibilities through the use of the body and through drawing for two and a half days, the students, in teams of five, concentrated during the final afternoon in devising and communicating narratives through five tableaux corresponding to equivalent storyboard moments. The physical work was presented by each team to the rest of the participants who were asked to shut their eyes between moments. This was the most difficult exercise as the tendency to over complicate was eventually overcome by the students as they realised that with their bodies and their imagination, a bit of charcoal and a piece of paper, they could tell a story out of nothing.

In the final reflection that followed the storyboarding exercise, the students were able to articulate this as a major achievement which effected not only their understanding of the body in movement and the drawing of it, but also the very essence of what performance is about, and how access to their own imagination can be unlocked in renewed ways.

Students' feedback

Although the students had the opportunity to reflect on their learning at the end of the workshop, it was important to test whether the effect of the workshop was more lasting. At the end of the following term all participating students were contacted by email with a list of questions, to which nine out of twenty replied, all continuing to be positive about the experience. The quality of the comments from individuals was instrumental in my desire to put onto paper the context and the ideas of this workshop.

Here are some of the most useful students' quotes:

Anna Smith, BA Theatre Design for Performance : 'I have found that through drawing and using some of the techniques we learnt during the workshop I can now understand character'. 'The workshop has made me see performance as a more two way form of communication and has caused me to think more about what the movements that are performed feel like'.

Hannah Gravestock, PhD student, Wimbledon, has found that she has been able to apply the learning to her professional work as a designer. She perceives her work now differently, 'there is a dynamic energy in the drawings from the workshop', something she has looked for in the past, 'this work has shown me how'.

Yula Reindell, MA (Independent Project) the workshop made clear to her that 'communication is a lot more than language' it showed her that the body is our main instrument of communication'. She became sensitive to 'the space between the people' and 'touch'. Much of this has informed her MA project and her drawing is now far more three-dimensional as she considers the space the body inhabits.

Claire Strickland, BA Technical Effects for Performance. 'The workshop made me realise that you can create a story from anything'. Initially she thought that the movement had a stronger impact on her, later she realised that 'the drawing part did have just as much effect on me - it was just more subtle'.

Isobel Dunhill, BA Theatre Design - The workshop was a huge learning curve for me and I watch people more because of it'.

'My sketchbooks are of human arrangements, and figures occupying spaces, whereas previously I would have shied away from the figure and focused more on objects and architectural spaces'.

Dan Liu, MA Costume Design for Performance: 'The workshop helped me build a relationship between the whole vision and the inner meaning of movement'. She feels her work is now 'more meaningful'.

Again, as in the Photography, Image and the Body workshop, the specific aims of Moving/ Drawing, which were around drawing movement and movement awareness, were superseded by a deeper understanding of the students' own relationship to their work, and in certain cases a repositioning of themselves in relation to their work. Dan Liu describes this shift as an understanding of 'the inner meaning of movement' and its relationship to 'the whole vision', and connects this to her work becoming more meaningful.

This shift in perception has a more specific application for some of the other students, for example a greater understanding of character, for Anna Smith, and of performance, for Claire Strickland, were matched by a increased confidence in their drawing. Isobel Dunhill perceives this change through the work in her sketchbooks, while Hannah Gravestock finds application of the exercises to her design work.

Feedback from the workshop leaders

Neither of the workshop leaders had previously led a workshop that brought together movement and drawing. Their feedback was obtained through telephone interviews, and with notes emailed for correction. As in the case of the students their feedback was unanimously positive in terms of outcomes. Lilo felt that a great deal was achieved in such a short length of time, something that was evident in both their movement and their drawing work and that the students were aware of this. Charlotte concluded that, from her viewpoint, the greatest achievement of the workshop was 'enabling the students to overcome anxiety about what drawing is, thus opening up possibilities of what a drawing can do for their own ends not as a conceit'.

Where they differed was on their response to the presence of the video camera. Asked if any new ideas might have emerged from the work, Charlotte's reply was:

'The new aspect of the work that I encountered on the moving/drawing workshop was the use of technology. The creative use of the projected body set against the still body for example, introduced another dimension to working. I was delighted to incorporate this new technology into the workshop'.

However Lilo was less convinced of the role of the camera in relation to live performance work:

'I found the use of video not as useful – I felt that it did not exist in the moment enough. I felt it was more important to try to capture the here-and-now through drawing and the act of drawing was in the present, in the room at the same time, unlike the video, which was in the past'.

Nonetheless both Lilo and Charlotte appreciated and learnt from one another's area of expertise. Lilo, who took part in some of the drawing sessions, intends to continue to work with drawing:

'The physical act of drawing was really interesting, I found it more useful than the use of camera. I enjoyed the directness of wanting to express on paper something ephemeral such as a moment in time. Theatre is by its nature ephemeral. I will carry on drawing as a way to express ideas and moments.'

Charlotte considered the way in which her existing practice, which is focused on the body, might be effected by the work with movement:

'The importance of looking and drawing is central to my work, as is the body. I have always used my own body, a 'posed' body, as a starting point, through photographs for example, mostly for purely practical reasons.... However, the workshop has extended my understanding of this; that by using myself, as a model is more than just convenience. I have a sense that when I pose for my own work I feel the position by doing it I therefore understand that there is meaning contained within the pose. The movement is part of this. It has given me confirmation of the way I work with the figure in space. It has made explicit what I do instinctively.'

The workshop thrived on leaders who themselves were engaged in an open and creative process through the work they did with the participants. Although much of the planning and structuring of the workshop had happened by the time we all met the participants in Lime Grove, both Lilo and Charlotte admitted that they responded to what they saw happen on the day, and that they were both sensitive to participants and to one another. This open engagement was fundamental to the success of the work and for a true cross fertilization to take place.

Conclusion

As a teacher of design for performance, my learning curve has been as great, if not greater than the one the students' have experienced.

The teaching of drawing the body and the awareness of movement, both arguably indispensable to the process of teaching design for performance, if taught together can add up to far more than the sum of their parts. Students developed their understanding of performance, redefined their own creative process as a result of the workshop and in certain cases redefined their relationship to their work and the way they positioned themselves in relation to performance.

Equally, collaborative interdisciplinary taught workshops, planned with colleagues that are carefully selected will not only be of benefit to the participants but can offer creative input into the teaching and the practice of the workshop leaders.

By putting the body, one's own body, at the centre of the creative process the participants to the workshop appear to benefit the most from the learning opportunities offered by these structured, interdisciplinary workshops. The corporeal engagement of the body is central to Lecoq's philosophical position, whose physical theatre teaching is based on the premise that we develop our knowledge of 'the world through gesture, movement and touch, all of which in Lecoq's analysis, precedes the word' (Murrey, 2002: 76).

My premise to the students with whom I shall work next term will be that costume design is about space, movement and the body, which can be processed through drawing, and that our own body in movement can help us access and harness our creative responses with more clarity and directness.

'The importance of looking and drawing is central to my work, as is the body. I have always used my own body, a 'posed' body, as a starting point, through photographs for example, mostly for purely practical reasons....'

Acknowledgements

École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, run, since Jacques Lecoq's death in 1999 by daughter Pascale Lecoq and Krikor Belekian

Lecoq, quoted in Murray (2003), from the documentary *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq*, Jean-Noel Roy and Jean-Gabriel Carasso (1999), *La Sept Arte-On Line Productions-ANRAT*

Theatre company founded by Simon McBurney and fellow Lecoq graduates, which is credited, amongst others, as having made physical theatre a major force for change in British theatre.

As a result of the 2005 London LEM, an exhibition of photographs and processwork was presented in The Fashion Space at London College of Fashion, curated by Natasha Freedman, from *Complicite'*. Sue Goodman quote was displayed in the exhibition and received by *Complicite'* as part of the formal feedback from the participants.

During his years in Italy, from 1948 to 1956, Jacques Lecoq developed leather masks with sculptor Amleto Sartori, including the neutral mask. This type of mask is used as part of devising processes at the school and amongst physical practitioners.

Quote transcribed from videoed footage of the workshop and translation from the French by Natasha Freedman

N. Freedman, Interview with author, 3rd September 2007

N. Freedman, Interview with author, 3rd September 2007

L. Baur, Interview with author, July 2007

S. Ainsley, Interview with author, July 2007

S. Ainsley, Interview with author, July 2007

S. Ainsley, Interview with author, July 2007

N. Freedman, Interview with author, 3rd September 2007

Feldenkrais Method used for a system of aided body movements intended to increase bodily awareness and ease tension

Movement practice associated with Tai-Chi and which promoted body awareness

London College of Fashion website

<http://www.fashion.arts.ac.uk/28677.htm>

L. Baur, Interview with author, July 2007

C. Hodes, Interview with author, July 2007

This exercise was part of the previous workshops, LEM and Photography, Image and the Body. The card used for these workshops was one meter square which was a better size than the A1 sheets used in the moving/drawing workshop.

Translation of 'Tout Bouge' the title of Jacques Lecoq's presentation to the Mime festival in 1981.

All the students quotes listed below were obtained as part of written feedback in response to a questionnaire sent out to all participants three months after the end of the workshop.

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interdisciplinary,
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